



U.S. Department of Justice

National Drug Intelligence Center

Office of the Director

319 Washington Street, 5th Floor
Johnstown, PA 15901-1622

(814) 532-4601
Fax: (814) 532-4690

April 11, 2008

Mr. Rick Kaplan
Executive Producer
CBS Evening News
524 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019


Dear Mr. Kaplan:

In the April 4, 2008, edition of the CBS Evening News with Katie Couric you ran a story titled, "Earmarks Linked to Campaign Dollars" that was factually flawed. In the story, the correspondent, Ms. Sharyl Attkinsson, states, "Every year the White House tries to close it because they already have a drug intelligence center. But Murtha keeps the duplicate open using – you guessed it – half-a-billion dollars in earmarks" while the picture shows an exterior shot of the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). The assertion that the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) duplicates EPIC is incorrect.

As set forth in the federal government's General Counterdrug Intelligence Plan (readily available on the Internet), approved by President Clinton in February of 2000, NDIC is the "principal center for *domestic strategic* counterdrug analysis in support of policymakers and resource planners." EPIC is designated as the "principal center for *operational and investigative* intelligence analysis of illicit drug movements in support of interdiction activities and U.S. law enforcement." Each center has a clearly defined mission, separate and distinct from the other. The work of each center complements not supplements that of the other.

The professions of journalism and intelligence are similar in that both value accuracy, thoroughness, and objectivity in the collection of facts and in the production of the final finished product. As the Director of NDIC, I strive to have our intelligence analysts take all the steps necessary to produce intelligence reports that are factually accurate. In that vein, I appreciate receiving constructive feedback to correct errors and to instruct our analysts to improve future products. No doubt, you feel the same way regarding the accuracy of the work product of your producers and correspondents.

Sincerely,


Michael F. Walther
Director

cc: Mr. Chris Scholl (CBS Evening News)